

RAILROADING

Post-Visit Activity



Activity	Railroad Towns
Setting	Classroom, Library, and/or Home
Duration	1 week
Subject Areas	Language Arts, Social Studies
Skills	Researching, Analyzing, Interpreting
Grade Level	4-5

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. research a New River Gorge community that prospered as a railroad town
2. describe how the community was affected by the railroad

WV-IGOs:

Language Arts - 4.26, 4.48, 4.52, 4.53, 4.54, 4.83, 5.16, 5.52, 5.53, 5.58
West Virginia History - WV 17

VOCABULARY

See Glossary

MATERIALS

1. books
2. pictures
3. other research materials connected with railroad activity of Hinton or Thurmond, WV

BACKGROUND

The completion of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway in 1873 was a major step in overcoming transportation barriers in the New River Gorge. With the railroad came people and job opportunities. This resulted in an increase in communities and towns. Many of these towns prospered significantly and became well established. Two of these towns were Hinton and Thurmond. As time passed, railroading activity diminished in both of these communities. Jobs associated with the railroad dwindled, and as a result, the populations of these towns also have declined.

PROCEDURES

1. This activity should be used by the classroom teacher as a comprehensive study of the unit on "railroading." At this point, students should have discussed many vocabulary words associated with the railroad and will have had input from a National Park Service ranger in their studies concerning railroad towns.
2. Teachers will need to decide whether students should work individually, with a partner, in small groups, or with the whole class.





PROCEDURES

3. The teacher should select a town or community for students to focus on during this activity (i.e., Thurmond, WV, or Hinton, WV). The teacher may choose one community for the whole class or may divide the class in half. The groups can then compare the two towns.
4. Students should add to their knowledge of their railroad town through research. As a homework project, students could bring in information pertaining to their selected community. Or the teacher could visit the local library to check out needed materials for the students to use.
5. Students should write a summary of what they have learned about the chosen railroad community. This may be in the form of a simplified research paper. It should be an appropriate length for this grade level. The teacher may use this as a language arts activity with students writing a rough draft, revising, and rewriting a final paper.

EVALUATION

Grade paper for grammar, sentence structure, and spelling.

EXTENSION

1. Have students make a picture collage of the railroad community that they have researched.
2. Have students develop a play or drama based on life in a railroad town. Students could be assigned parts to learn and could present their program for other classes.
3. Ask local businesses if you could display your students' research papers or collages to showcase what your students have learned.

